



KANSAS CITY  
SYMPHONY

# The French Masters

DEBUSSY'S NOCTURNES

May 9-11, 2025



**MATTHIAS PINTSCHER, MUSIC DIRECTOR AND CONDUCTOR**  
**SOPHIA BURGOS, SOPRANO**  
**KANSAS CITY SYMPHONY CHORUS,**  
**CHARLES BRUFFY, CHORUS DIRECTOR**

Helzberg Hall, Kauffman Center for the Performing Arts

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# The French Masters

DEBUSSY'S NOCTURNES

Friday, May 9, 2025 at 8 p.m.

Saturday, May 10, 2025 at 8 p.m.

Sunday, May 11, 2025 at 2 p.m.

Helzberg Hall, Kauffman Center for the Performing Arts

**MATTHIAS PINTSCHER, MUSIC DIRECTOR AND CONDUCTOR**

**SOPHIA BURGOS, SOPRANO**

**KANSAS CITY SYMPHONY CHORUS, CHARLES BRUFFY, CHORUS DIRECTOR**

## **GABRIEL FAURÉ**

*Masques et bergamasques*, op. 112

- I. Ouverture: Allegro molto vivo
- II. Menuet: Tempo di minuetto. Allegretto moderato
- III. Gavotte: Allegro vivo
- IV. Pastorale: Andantino tranquillo

## **FRANCIS POULENC**

Gloria

- I. Gloria
- II. Laudamus te
- III. Domine Deus, Rex Caelestis
- IV. Domine Fili unigenite
- V. Domine Deus, Agnus Dei
- VI. Qui sedes ad dexteram Patris  
Sophia Burgos, soprano  
Kansas City Symphony Chorus

Intermission

## **CLAUDE DEBUSSY**

Nocturnes, L. 98

- I. Nuages (Clouds)
- II. Fêtes (Festivals)
- III. Sirènes (Sirens)  
Kansas City Symphony Chorus



# Matthias Pintscher

MUSIC DIRECTOR  
AND CONDUCTOR

Matthias Pintscher is the newly appointed music director of the Kansas City Symphony, beginning with the 2024/25 season. He has just concluded a successful decade-long tenure as the music director of the Ensemble Intercontemporain, the iconic Parisian contemporary ensemble founded by Pierre Boulez and winner of the 2022 Polar Prize. During his stewardship, Pintscher led this most adventurous institution in the creation of dozens of world premieres by cutting-edge composers from all over the world and took the ensemble on tours around the globe — to Asia and North America and throughout Europe to all the major festivals and concert halls.

The 2023/24 season was Pintscher's fourth year as Creative Partner at the Cincinnati Symphony, where he conducted a new work by intí figgis-vizueta, as well as an immersive video concert of Olivier Messiaen's *Des Canyons aux étoiles*. He also toured with the Junge Deutsche Philharmonie where he is artist-in-residence. As guest conductor, he returned to the RAI Milano Musica, Orchestre de Chambre de Paris, NDR Hamburg, Indianapolis

Symphony, Milwaukee Symphony, Barcelona Symphony, Lahti Symphony, Deutsche Kammerphilharmonie Bremen, La Scala and Berlin's Boulez Ensemble. Pintscher has conducted several opera productions for the Berliner Staatsoper, Wiener Staatsoper and Théâtre du Châtelet in Paris. He returned to the Berliner Staatsoper in 2024 for Beat Furrer's *Violetter Schnee*.

Pintscher is also well-known as a composer, and his works appear frequently on the programs of major symphony orchestras throughout the world. In August 2021, he was the focus of the Suntory Hall Summer Festival — a weeklong celebration of his works with the Tokyo Symphony Orchestra as well as a residency by the Ensemble Intercontemporain with symphonic and chamber music performances. His third violin concerto, *Assonanza*, written for Leila Josefowicz, premiered in January 2022 with the Cincinnati Symphony.

# Sophia Burgos

## SOPRANO

Puerto Rican-American soprano Sophia Burgos has in recent seasons established herself internationally as a singer of outstanding intelligence, musicality and stage presence.

Highlights of her 2024/25 season include her house and role debut as Sabine in Battistelli's *7 Minuti* at Opéra de Lyon, her return to the U.S. for a concert tour throughout the States and to Puerto Rico with Apollo's Fire, concerts of Poulenc's Gloria with the Kansas City Symphony and works by Alfano with Holst Sinfonietta in Milan and Turin.

Most recently, Burgos gave her house and role debuts as Pamina in *Die Zauberflöte* at Volksoper Wien and at De Vlaamse Opera as Mrs. Naidoo in Philip Glass' *Satyagraha*. She returned to Opéra Nantes-Angers as Vercors in the world premiere of Philippe Leroux's *L'Annonce faite à Marie* and gave her debut at the Ruhrtriennale Festival in a staged production of Grisey's *Quatre chants pour franchir le seul* with Klangforum Wien. With Sir John Eliot Gardiner she also performed Maria in Bernstein's *West Side Story* at the Edinburgh International Festival to outstanding critical acclaim.

Burgos holds a master's degree from the Bard College Conservatory's Graduate Vocal Arts Program. Awards include the Staetshuys Fonds Prize and Van Riemsdijk Prize in the 54th International Vocal Competition

's-Hertogenbosch (Liedduo) in 2021, 2nd Prize and Special Prize at the 2018 Schubert und die Musik der Moderne competition in Graz, and the German Lied Prize at the 2017 Nadia and Lili Boulanger International Voice-Piano Competition in Paris.



In addition to her career as a singer, Burgos is passionate about education and outreach through art, holding a degree and certification in music education. She recently started her own YouTube channel to create a space for audience members to connect directly with classical music and its performers.

Originally from Chicago, Illinois, Burgos' earliest musical influences were Spanish folk song and dance, as she and her family are strongly tied to their Puerto Rican heritage.

# Charles Bruffy

## CHORUS DIRECTOR

One of the most admired choral conductors in the United States, Charles Bruffy began his career as a tenor soloist, performing with the Robert Shaw Festival Singers for recordings and concerts in France and concerts at Carnegie Hall. Shaw encouraged his development as a conductor and the New York Times acknowledged him as an heir to Shaw's legacy. He received his undergraduate degree from Missouri Western State University in St. Joseph and his master's degree in voice performance from the Conservatory of Music at the University of Missouri-Kansas City. A scholarship fund has been established at the Conservatory in his name. Bruffy has been artistic director of the Kansas City Chorale since 1988 and chorus director for the Kansas City Symphony since 2008.

Respected and renowned for his fresh and passionate interpretations of standards of the choral music repertoire, and for championing new music, he has commissioned and premiered works by composers such as Jean Belmont Ford, Ola Gjeilo, Matthew Harris, Anne Kilstofte, Libby Larsen, Zhou Long, Cecilia McDowall, Michael McGlynn, Stephen Paulus, Jessica Rudman, Steven Sametz, Terry Schlenker, Philip Stopford, Steven Stucky, Eric Whitacre, Edna Yeh and Chen Yi.

Under Bruffy's supervision, MusicSpoke and the Roger Dean

Company, a division of the Lorenz Corporation, publish a choral series specializing in music for professional ensembles and sophisticated high school and college choirs. His eclectic discography includes five albums on the Nimbus label and eight recordings for Chandos Records, three of which have been recognized by the Academy of Recording Arts and Sciences with Grammy® Awards for Best Choral Performance. Joining the likes of Alan Bergman, Maynard Ferguson, Carlisle Floyd, Daniel E. Gawthrop, Andy Griffith, Ellis Marsalis, Jr. and Frank Ticheli, Bruffy was celebrated in 2017 with the Signature Sinfonian award conferred by the national fraternal society Phi Mu Alpha, recognizing "alumni members who have achieved a high standard of accomplishment in their field."

In his spare time, Bruffy breeds and raises Arabian and Saddlebred horses on his ranch just south of Kansas City in Cass County, Missouri.





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## ABOUT THE KANSAS CITY SYMPHONY CHORUS

The Kansas City Symphony Chorus, led by Grammy® Award-winning Chorus Director Charles Bruffy, is a 160-voice ensemble that continues its long tradition of excellence serving as “the choral voice of the Kansas City Symphony.” The Symphony Chorus has been offering quality choral music to the greater Kansas City metropolitan area since the early 1960s, first as the Mendelssohn Choir and then as the Civic Chorus. Before the appointment of Chorus Director Charles Bruffy in 2008, the Symphony Chorus worked under the direction of choral conductors Eph Ehly and Arnold Epley.

The Symphony Chorus has represented Kansas City in five concert tours, including performances in New York City, Boston, the Berkshires, Germany, Austria, Switzerland and Mexico where it performed with the Mexico City Symphony. The Symphony Chorus women recorded Holst’s *The Planets* with the Kansas City Symphony in January 2015.

The Kansas City Symphony Chorus musicians are all volunteers from the region’s extensive musical community selected through rigorous auditions. Members have rich backgrounds in both music education and performance, and are engaged as soloists and conductors in schools, churches and venues throughout the region.

## KANSAS CITY SYMPHONY CHORUS ROSTER

Charles Bruffy, *Chorus Director*

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Connie VanEngen

Amy Vander Molen

Annie Walsh

Denise Weigand

Suzanne Wilmot

Evelyn Wouters

Victoria Zackert



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 Lynne Beebe  
 Lauren Beemer  
 Joyce Bibens  
 Katie Camlin  
 Marlene Carnahan  
 Briana Carrillo  
 Quinlan Carttar  
 Hyang Sook Choi  
 Jan Cohick  
 Helen Cowan  
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 Anna Featherston  
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 Katherine Lang  
 Julia Leamon  
 Lori LeVine  
 Meghan LeVota  
 Becky Lindenmuth  
 Diane Martin  
 Sandra McCormick  
 Hollie Meek  
 Heidi Menssen  
 Jillian Miller  
 Svetlana Mitchell  
 Karla Morgan Massia  
 Madeline Rettman  
 Carol Robinson  
 Angela Schumacher-Porras  
 Caitlin Smith  
 Greta K. Sonnenberg  
 Karen I. Spalding  
 Sheree Stoppel  
 Madison Thomas  
 Sara Treffer  
 Caitlin Walker  
 Grace Wampler  
 Carolyn Welch  
 Sarah Zung

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 Leon Barnes  
 Kit Doyle  
 Bryce Elder  
 Ryan Flemmer  
 Keith D. Florea  
 Presten Fry  
 Fredrick Hoepfner  
 Brandon Hottman  
 Nate Hubert  
 James Jorns  
 Russell Joy  
 Mark Kahler  
 Benjamin Kiel  
 Mark Lange  
 Tony Locatelli  
 Trent Menssen  
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 Andy Pierce  
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## Gabriel Fauré (1845–1924)

### *Masques et bergamasques, op. 112*

(1919)

14 minutes

*2 flutes, 2 oboes, 2 clarinets, 2 bassoons, 2 horns, 2 trumpets, timpani, harp and strings.*

#### THE STORY

French composer Gabriel Fauré served as the director of the Paris Conservatoire from 1905 until 1920. As the director he fostered new music of all kinds and was widely respected by composers from all schools of thought, but the position left him with limited time for his own compositions. He received a commission in 1918 from Prince Albert I of Monaco for a choreographic divertissement (theatrical entertainment with dancing), and despite his limited time and slightly frosty relationship with the theatre director, he agreed. But instead of writing a great deal of new music for something he expected would receive

only a few performances at best, he reworked music from the past 50 years of his compositional career, writing only one wholly new movement (the Pastorale).

Far from receiving a few performances, it was so successful that the French theatre director Albert Carré brought it to the Opéra-Comique in Paris in March 1920, where it was performed more than 100 times over the next 30 years. Due to the work's popularity, Fauré excerpted a suite from it that included four of the eight movements, and the suite itself also became very popular.

The title *Masques et bergamasques* comes from a line in the French poem

“Clair de lune” by Paul Verlaine, which formed the basis of the story. “Masques” refers to masks or a masked ball, while “bergamasques” is an adjective referring to the Italian city of Bergamo and a folk dance there (the French version of what we might call in English “Bergamo-esque”). The juxtaposition of a “highbrow” masked ball and a “lowbrow” folk dance references the story and also (due to the “masques” in “bergamasques”) serves as a bit of a pun.

### THE MUSIC

The opening Overture had originally been written in 1869 for a symphony that Fauré eventually abandoned and is a lively, cheerful dance. Fauré wrote to his wife, “the overture sounds like Mozart imitating Fauré — an amusing idea.” The Menuet, written

for the same symphony and also incorporating music from one of Fauré’s piano preludes, is a more stately and formal dance — the “highbrow” dance of the upper classes. The chipper Gavotte was originally written for piano, also in 1869, and an orchestral version was incorporated in the composer’s Suite for Orchestra, op. 20. The Pastorale was the only movement specifically written for the divertissement; in the full piece it comes after the Overture but in the suite it serves as the closing movement. Its tranquil nostalgia perhaps paints a sunset at the end of the story, and was a sunset for Fauré as well: it was the last piece he composed for orchestra before his death in 1924.

— *AJ Harbison*

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# Francis Poulenc

(1899-1963)

## Gloria, FP 177

(1960)

24 minutes

*Soprano solo, mixed chorus, 2 piccolos, 2 flutes, 2 oboes, English horn, 2 clarinets, bass clarinet, 2 bassoons, contrabassoon, 4 horns, 3 trumpets, 3 trombones, tuba, timpani, harp and strings.*



### THE STORY

One of the most famous pieces by the Baroque composer Antonio Vivaldi is his Gloria, a setting for soloists, chorus and orchestra of the “Gloria” text of the Catholic Mass. Nearly 250 years after that piece was written, the French composer Francis Poulenc wrote to a friend in 1959, “I have just begun a Gloria for chorus, soloist, and orchestra in the Vivaldi style.” After a profound religious experience in 1936, Poulenc composed many sacred works, including this Gloria near the end of his life.

The score notes that the piece was commissioned by the Koussevitsky Foundation, but the road to that commission was a bumpy one. The foundation first approached Poulenc in the spring of 1959 with a commission for a symphony; Poulenc responded that he was not interested in writing a symphony. They came back with a commission for an organ concerto, to which Poulenc replied that he had already written one. Finally, in July, they came back once more saying they had approved a commissioning award for whatever the composer wanted

to write. Poulenc accepted the award this time, telling them he had already started working on the Gloria.

### THE MUSIC

Many composers who set the Gloria text on its own break it up into multiple movements (it is the longest text in the Mass apart from the Credo), and Poulenc is no exception. His version has six movements. The first begins with a series of fanfares that start in G major but end in B minor; this tension between keys is an integral part of the whole work. The chorus’ role in the movement is largely declamatory, but Poulenc adds an element of interest by setting the text in rhythms that don’t always line up with the normal accents of the words. Offbeat accents are exaggerated (and transferred to the orchestra) in the “Laudamus te” movement, which was supposedly inspired by a game of soccer played by Benedictine monks that Poulenc had watched. The lighthearted music is interrupted briefly by a softer and more somber middle section featuring altos alone and then orchestra alone, but the “soccer game” returns with the “propter magnam” text.

The solo soprano enters for the first time with dramatic flair in the minor-key “Domine Deus, Rex caelestis,” which ends (surprisingly) on a major chord that (even more surprisingly) adds a dissonant minor seventh. In a stark contrast, the fourth movement, “Domine Fili unigenite,” is marked “very fast and playful,” with the chorus’ music recalling some of the rhythms of the first movement. The fifth movement, “Domine Deus, Agnus Dei,” is another contrast, marked “very slow,” and begins with an extended orchestral introduction moving through shifting and unsettled harmonies. This movement is the furthest away harmonically from the G major/B minor of the rest of the piece, beginning in B-flat minor and ending in E-flat minor. The soprano soloist plays a key role in this movement, “leading” the chorus in a similar manner to the third

movement. The final movement, “Qui sedes ad dexteram Patris,” begins with a startling fortissimo (very loud) line from the altos and tenors a cappella. Many of the elements from other movements return in this one, including the fanfares from the first, orchestral accompaniment patterns from the first and fourth, and the dramatic pause after a dissonant chord from the second, as well as harmonies from all of them. In the last minute of the piece, framed by a chord encompassing both G major and B minor, the word “Amen” is sung four times — once very loudly by the chorus, once loudly by the soprano, once very softly by the chorus, and once very softly by the soprano, as the orchestra fades to silence.

— AJ Harbison

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# Gloria Text and Translation

## **I. GLORIA**

Gloria in excelsis Deo  
et in terra pax hominibus bonae voluntatis.

## **II. LAUDAMUS TE**

Laudamus te,  
benedicimus te,  
adoramus te,  
glorificamus te,  
gratias agimus tibi propter magnam gloriam  
tuam.

## **III. DOMINE DEUS, REX CAELESTIS**

Domine Deus, Rex caelestis,  
Deus Pater omnipotens.

## **IV. DOMINE FILI UNIGENITE**

Domine Fili unigenite,  
Jesu Christe.

## **V. DOMINE DEUS, AGNUS DEI**

Domine Deus, Agnus Dei,  
Filius Patris,  
qui tollis peccata mundi,  
miserere nobis;  
qui tollis peccata mundi,  
suscipe deprecationem nostram.

## **VI. QUI SEDES AD DEXTERAM PATRIS**

Qui sedes ad dexteram Patris,  
miserere nobis.  
Quoniam tu solus Sanctus,  
tu solus Dominus,  
Amen.  
Tu solus Altissimus,  
Jesu Christe,  
cum Sancto Spiritu,  
in gloria Dei Patris.  
Amen.

## **I. GLORY**

Glory to God in the highest  
and on earth peace to men of good will.

## **II. WE PRAISE YOU**

We praise You,  
we bless You,  
we adore You,  
we glorify You,  
we give You thanks for Your great glory.

## **III. LORD GOD, KING OF HEAVEN**

Lord God, King of heaven,  
God the Father almighty.

## **IV. LORD, ONLY BEGOTTEN SON**

Lord, only begotten Son,  
Jesus Christ.

## **V. LORD GOD, LAMB OF GOD**

Lord God, Lamb of God,  
Son of the Father,  
who takes away the sins of the world,  
have mercy on us;  
You who take away the sins of the world,  
receive our prayer.

## **VI. YOU WHO ARE SEATED AT THE RIGHT HAND OF THE FATHER**

You who are seated at the right hand of the Father,  
have mercy on us.  
For You alone are the Holy One,  
You alone are the Lord,  
Amen.  
You alone are the Most High,  
Jesus Christ,  
with the Holy Spirit,  
in the glory of God the Father.  
Amen.



## Claude Debussy (1862-1918)

### Nocturnes, L. 98

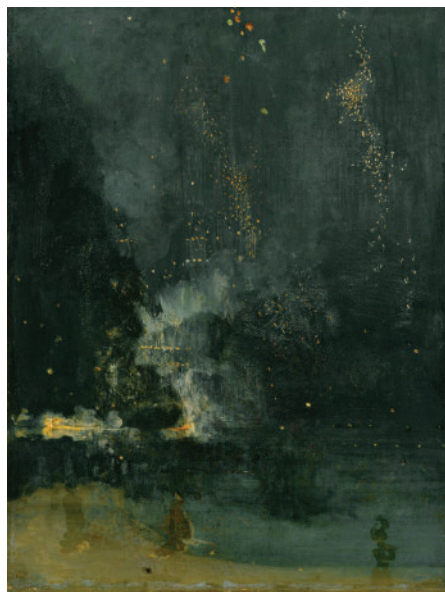
(1899)

25 minutes

*Women's chorus, piccolo, 3 flutes, 2 oboes, English horn, 2 clarinets, 3 bassoons, 4 horns, 3 trumpets, 3 trombones, tuba, timpani, cymbals, snare drum, 2 harps and strings.*

#### THE STORY

The path Claude Debussy's Nocturnes took from initial conception to completion was a long and winding one. He first was inspired, in 1892, by poems by Henri de Régnier and planned the piece as three scenes at twilight; it may have been intended for a concert in New York that eventually fell through. Debussy completed the work as a piano sketch, but before he orchestrated it, he decided to rewrite it as a piece featuring a solo violin with orchestra, with different groupings of instruments for each movement. He then became inspired by the impressionist paintings of James McNeill Whistler and decided to retitle the scenes as Nocturnes after a series of Whistler paintings. Finally, he scrapped the idea of the solo violin and instrument groupings and decided



"Nocturne in Black and Gold — The Falling Rocket," one of James McNeill Whistler's "Nocturne" paintings.

to write all three movements for a full orchestra. Seven years after his initial idea, he finished the Nocturnes (or so he thought) in December 1899.

After the premiere performance in October 1901, Debussy continued revising the piece, correcting errors, making adjustments to short passages and ultimately rewriting much of the orchestration. In one score, changes were made in different colors and were often contradictory of each other; when a conductor asked Debussy which changes were the right ones, the composer replied, "I'm not really sure; they are all possibilities. Take this score with you and use whatever you like from it." A "definitive version" was published in 1930, 12 years after Debussy's death.

## THE MUSIC

A review of the first performance by a fellow French composer enthused, "It is pure music, conceived beyond the limits of reality, in the world of dreams, among the ever-moving architecture that God builds with mists, the marvelous creations of the impalpable realms." Debussy himself wrote, "The title 'Nocturnes' is to be interpreted here in a general and, more

particularly, in a decorative sense. Therefore, it is not meant to designate the usual form of the Nocturne, but rather all the various impressions and the special effects of light that the word suggests."

The first movement depicts the slow, solemn motion of clouds through long-breathed lines of parallel chords and a solo English horn, as well as a second theme introduced by flute and harp. "Fêtes" was inspired by Debussy's childhood memories of festivals in a park near where he grew up; it is animated and rhythmic, and includes a parade by a drum and bugle corps that starts in the distance and grows to a climax. The final movement paints a picture of the mythical Sirens, who were partially human creatures with beautiful and alluring voices that are portrayed in this piece by a wordless women's chorus. According to Debussy, this movement "depicts the sea and its countless rhythms and presently, amongst the waves silvered by the moonlight, is heard the mysterious song of the Sirens as they laugh and pass on."

— *AJ Harbison*





## KANSAS CITY SYMPHONY

In only its 42nd season, the Kansas City Symphony has already become one of America's most vibrant major orchestras and has gained national and international recognition. With the 2024/25 season, the Symphony welcomes conductor and composer Matthias Pintscher as its new music director. Pintscher regularly conducts many of the world's best orchestras and opera companies and ranks as one of the world's foremost composers of orchestral music.

Continually creating live music experiences in Helzberg Hall, located in the prestigious Kauffman Center for the Performing Arts, the Symphony serves Kansas City's metro population of more than 2.2 million people as well as welcoming visitors from around the globe. The Symphony's 80 full-time musicians from around the world bring a diverse and dynamic range of musical experiences to our audiences in both orchestral and chamber music formats each season. In addition to concerts in Helzberg Hall, Symphony musicians perform throughout the region on our portable stage, the Mobile Music Box. The Symphony also serves as the

orchestra for the Kansas City Ballet and the Lyric Opera of Kansas City, adding to the rich cultural experiences that these organizations offer to the community.

Top international soloists perform with the Symphony every season, including brilliant classical musicians, popular singer/songwriters, rock bands and other creative performers. The Symphony also performs live soundtracks for a variety of fan-favorite films, with the movie projected on a giant screen above the stage.

Music connects us; it has the unique ability to draw us closer to our inner selves and also closer to one another, transcending our differences. Every Kansas City Symphony concert will take you on an emotional journey — a journey that's deeply personal but also a journey that we all experience together as one.

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## ORCHESTRA ROSTER

Matthias Pintscher, *Music Director*

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*Miller Nichols Chair*

Stirling Trent, *Associate Concertmaster*

Sunho Kim, *Assistant Concertmaster*

Anne-Marie Brown

Michael Brown

Betty Chen

Anthony DeMarco

Susan Goldenberg\*

Tomoko Iguchi

Dorris Dai Janssen

Aaron You-Xin Li^

Chiafei Lin

Vladimir Rykov

Alex Shum\*

### SECOND VIOLINS

Tamamo Someya Gibbs, *Principal*

Carter Coleman^, *Associate Principal*

Kristin Velicer, *Assistant Principal*

Minhye Helena Choi

Mary Garcia Grant

Kazato Inouye

Rena Ishii

Paul Kim

Stephanie Larsen

Jinyou Lee

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Contact Mark Laverentz,  
 Manager of Corporate  
 Partnerships, at 816.218.2601 or  
 mlaverentz@kcsymphony.org for  
 more information about the  
 Symphony Business Alliance.

# MATTHIAS CONDUCTS MAHLER

Music Director Matthias Pintscher leads Mahler's colossal Symphony No. 3 — transforming all of nature into music.

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Matthias Pintscher, music director and conductor  
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**GUSTAV MAHLER** Symphony No. 3



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# Beethoven's Violin Concerto

At his gold medal competition win, the audience stood, cheered and wept. Violinist Augustin Hadelich has been hailed as a courageous, powerful virtuoso.

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Beethoven's Violin Concerto will be performed with no intermission for the Friday Symphonic Piazza concert.

**SATURDAY, JUNE 7 AT 8 PM**

**SUNDAY, JUNE 8 AT 2 PM**

Asher Fisch, guest conductor  
Augustin Hadelich, violin

**RICHARD WAGNER** arr. by Henk de Vlieger  
*Parsifal: An Orchestral Quest*  
**LUDWIG VAN BEETHOVEN** Violin Concerto

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